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RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 5229  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 001733

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [OAS](#) [HA](#) [AR](#)  
SUBJECT: CHARGE MEETING WITH VICE MOD VASQUEZ OCAMPO

REF: A. BA 1665  
[1](#)B. BA 120  
[1](#)C. 05 BA 3145

Classified By: Charge d' affaires Michael Matera for  
reasons 1.4(a) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In an August 1 meeting with CDA Matera, Mil Group Commander, A/DATT and PolOff, Vice Minister of Defense (Vice-MOD) Vasquez Ocampo stated his satisfaction with the state of bilateral mil/mil relations, including continued cooperation, the Bilateral Working Group, training and exercises, and peace keeping activities. Vasquez Ocampo reiterated the strong GOA commitment to continued participation in the MINUSTAH peacekeeping mission in Haiti. He underlined the principled GOA approach to the modernization and reform of the Armed Forces, and the GOA's pursuit of justice for crimes committed by the security forces during the "dirty war." End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On August 1, CDA, along with MilGrp Commander, Acting DATT and PolOff, paid a courtesy call on MOD Vice Minister Jose Maria Vasquez Ocampo. Vasquez Ocampo's official title is Secretary for Military Affairs. He was joined in the meeting by Dr. Leonardo Hekimian, Director General for Policy, advisor Andrea Chiappini, and International Relations Advisor Carlos Moneta. Vice Minister Oscar Cuattromo, Secretary for Planning joined the meeting in progress.

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Mil-Mil Relations and Cooperation Program

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[1](#)3. (C) Vasquez Ocampo stated that he had enjoyed a "transparent and frank" dialogue with former Ambassador Gutierrez and CDA's predecessor Hugo Llorens, and hoped to continue the same with the new Embassy leadership. CDA echoed this sentiment and assured the Vice-MOD that the USG valued its excellent relations with the Argentine MOD and Armed Forces. MilGrp Commander noted that his office was working with an MOD team on defining and advancing the areas of cooperation for 2007 that Minister Garre, Vasquez Ocampo and Cuattromo had highlighted as priorities, i.e.: transformation and restructuring of the armed forces; strengthening jointness in the armed forces; strategic decision making; and defense resource management. The issue

of exercises was raised, with Vasquez Ocampo noting our differences over immunities, but expressed his support for continued Argentine participation in regional exercises. He indicated that the GOA had already submitted its list of proposed exercises to the Legislature, including UNITAS.

#### Human Rights and the Armed Forces Doctrine

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¶4. (C) Without prompting, Vasquez Ocampo offered some thoughts on human rights and the military. He said there had been a reluctant advance in this area in the military and stated that the MOD was still looking at Southcom's human rights program. He added that the Kirchner administration's focus on readdressing the "dirty war" was not a vendetta nor retaliation and said that, without justice, there is impunity, something that has existed in Argentina for too long. He said that what was needed was a re-establishment of values based on Argentine law and international human rights conventions.

¶5. (C) He noted that Argentina enjoys secure borders and, apart from some minor differences, good relations with its neighbors. The two primary areas at the moment where military policy is linked to regional policy are Haiti and Bolivia. The interest in both is for security/stability and peace. He noted the importance of the ongoing modernization and reform of the Armed Forces and the current rewriting of the defense "white paper," a top-to-bottom review of the Armed Forces' mission, force structure, doctrine, etc.

#### Haiti Peace Keeping and Lebanon

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¶6. (C) Vasquez Ocampo continued, noting that U.S.-Argentine relations/cooperation on Haiti were excellent. In reference to some local criticism voiced at the recent "People's Summit," held on the margins of the July 20-21 MERCOSUR Summit (ref.A) in regard to foreign troop presence in Haiti, Vasquez Ocampo stated that he believed the troop presence to be positive and not at all interventionist in the negative sense. He said it was essential that work proceed on a new governance plan in Haiti and that the GOA had already sent to the legislature its proposal for renewing the Argentine MINUSTAH contingent. He also said that the GOA is contemplating a beefed up police (Gendarmeria) participation in its Haiti contingent. Vasquez Ocampo noted that the MOD and MFA on August 4 were hosting the next Haiti troop contribution meeting of the seven most important contributing countries. CDA noted the pending UN meeting on troop contributions for the proposed International Force to be deployed in Southern Lebanon and asked the Vice-MOD's thoughts on the subject. The Vice-MOD didn't comment specifically on a possible troop commitment but did note Argentina's long peacekeeping history in the region, in Cyprus since 1993, and previously on the Iraq/Kuwait border.

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¶7. (U) Vice-MOD Vasquez Ocampo noted the upcoming Defense Ministerial of the Americas in Managua, October 1-5, and, when asked, said that the date for the Bilateral Working Group meeting had not been set yet but that it would likely take place sometime after the Managua Ministerial meeting. He noted that Minister Garre would make a decision in the next few days.

¶8. (U) CDA, noted the standing invitation to Minister Garre from General Looney, Commander of A.F. Education and Training Command, to visit the A.F. Academy. Vasquez Ocampo stated that the Minister was not planning any extended visits outside the country this year, wanting to focus on the major revision of the Argentine Armed Forces' mission and roles. CDA, A/DATT and MilGrp Commander also extended an invitation to the Vice-MOD to visit Washington and Southcom. Vasquez Ocampo said he was very interested and that he thought it would be good for both him and Vice-MOD Cuattromo to visit the U.S., however, not this year. CDA noted that January may be a good time to contemplate such a visit.

19. (C) Comment: This was a good first meeting with Vasquez Ocampo and Cuattromo with a solid, if not enthusiastic, endorsement of the bilateral mil-mil relationship. Vasquez Ocampo revealed early on his particular fixation with perceived human rights failings of past governments, but did not belabor the issue. (Note: his sister was "disappeared" during the "dirty war," and his mother was a founding member and is the current president of the "Madres de Plaza de Mayo - Linea Fundadora", a moderate advocacy group not to be confused with the Madres group led by the rabid Hebe de Bonafini. End Note.) He also is showing a greater coherence in his portrayal of the GOA's vision for a "transformed" Armed Forces.  
MATERA